1:Williams E,G-5 (1923-1925) 1930
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varied, indeed, by occasional squalls that may do considerable damage among the luxuriant but flimsy vegetation.

The South-East season is perceptibly drier and much more pleasant than the North-West. This becomes especially apparent to the traveller who in the former season can make a good pace over excellent native tracks, but in the latter must do more than a little wading. A former *Annual Report* gives the following account of the Aiga country: 'The track between Bogi and Tamata has the reputation of being in bad weather the worst in the Possession. The greater part of it passes through flat country, intersected by sluggish creeks and pandanus swamps. After heavy rain it is flooded for miles waist deep.'[1] One may reasonably doubt whether the Aiga country is often deserving of this description; but making allowance for a little pardonable exaggeration on the part of one who had evidently met with unpleasant conditions, we may take his word for it that in bad weather the tracks are very wet.

The contrast afforded by the drier months of 'winter' may be striking. Sometimes a long spell of sunny rainless weather, with refreshing, almost chilly, nights may lead to a serious dearth of food, and compel the natives to supplement their diet with a variety of leaves, roots, and fern-fronds from the bush. Although such scarcity never reaches the point of famine it may nevertheless be serious enough. The drought has in fact far more terrors for the Orokaiva than the destructive flood.

Conditions of temperature remain fairly equable. The following are figures for the official year, 1924–5:

Station.	*Dry Therm.*	*Wet Therm.*	*Maximum.*	*Minimum.*
Buna	82·2	77·3	87·3	68·4
Kokoda	74·3	72·3	88·3	67·3
Ioma	77·4	74·4	91·3	72·9

Vegetation

By far the greater part of the Northern Division is covered by forest. Some of this has at one time or another been

[1] *Annual Report*, 1904–5, p. 5.

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Transport

487 *Tracks.* Altogether we are unable to claim any high degree of engineering skill or architectural taste for the Orokaiva; but in magisterial estimation the excellence of the tracks makes ample amends. These are said to compare favourably with those of any other Division, though it is doubtful whether the Orokaiva of former days bestowed any exceptional care upon them; for if left to themselves they seem, with their naked legs and hardy feet, equally indifferent to the mud of swamps or the obstacles of the road.

But nowadays in some parts and at some times—particularly before the periodical visit of the magistrate—the track may be swept and garnished and guiltless of the minutest weed; for at the behest of the village constable the men turn out with trade knives and spade-like scrapers of tin, to nick, shave, and almost polish the surface of the road.

491 *Bridges.* Formerly, I am told, stretches of swamp were spanned by single logs supported on cross-trestles. The modern type of this bridge has an adzed surface to make walking safer, and is certainly preferable to the other style (viz. a raised gangway with clumsily laid cross-pieces) until, as is so often the case, the log is found to be slippery and aslant. Small creeks are crossed by single tree-trunks, over which the native, a fearless balancer, walks without misgiving, despite the queer and disconcerting vibrations set up by his footsteps on a long log.

491 One is told of the former existence of cane-bridges swung
177 from the branches of tall trees overhanging the banks of a river. Nowadays these cobweb bridges are replaced by more workmanlike, though still somewhat precarious, fabrics, in which the cane is reinforced by steel wire. Such improvements are necessitated only by the presence of the white man, whose feet are delicately encased in boots, and who, apart from his fastidiousness regarding the mire, seems by comparison deficient in the nerve which altitude and balancing demand.

491 The rivers in their upper reaches are commonly forded. A party bound for a dance, fully armed and decorated, will